

Christian Billionaire Wants to Buy an Island for Syrian Refugees and Dedicate It to Drowned Boy

As the world's eyes are on Syria and the millions of people fleeing, one man says he has the solution to aid the refugees: He wants to buy an island to house the displaced people.

"I would build a small temporary marina," says telecom billionaire Naguib Sawiris. Sawiris made the remarks in an interview with CNN's Fareed Zakara after a photo of a drowned Syrian toddler went viral.

"I would build temporary housing and temporary school and temporary hospital. And then we will use these people and provide them jobs to build a new city on the island, to build this island. Because this war is not going to end in weeks or in months. It may be years even."

The Syrian crisis has drawn the world's eyes as international politicians focus on ending the war forcing residents to flee their homes.

Many of these people have fled to Germany, where Chancellor Angela Merkel has welcomed them with open arms. As a result, many have found the love of God and have converted from Islam to Christianity.

CNN reports nearly 4 million refugees have fled Syria, with 2 million finding homes in Turkey, 1.1 million in Lebanon, and 629,000 in Jordan.

Nearly 250,000 refugees have found their way to Greece, which is one of two locations Sawiris has in mind for his migrant

shelter. The other is Italy.

"I would like to have the consent of the prime minister of Italy or Greece to house and host these refugees in this island," Sawiris says. "... So the real challenge of the idea is that to have the authorities accept the fact that you will host immigrants there, and specifically Greece has a lot of islands that are for sale, and they should offer me an island for sale, but mainly accept that we host these immigrants there."

The Syrian Crisis gained renewed attention after the photo of a refugee toddler who drowned hit mainstream media outlets.

The crisis began in 2011 when pro-democracy protests erupted in the Southern city of Deraa, according to the *British Broadcasting Company*.

Syria descended into civil war by 2013, with thousands dying at the hands of chemical warfare and Islamic State violence, the BBC reports.

More 5.6 million children have been displaced from their homes, but it was the viral photo that caught Sawiris' attention and allowed him to formulate his plan.

"It's the picture of Aylan that woke me up," Sawiris says. "It was a very touching picture. In addition to that, the way these pictures were coming out of Hungary, the way these refugees were being treated by the authorities there, and being, you know, beaten and put into the trains and buses, I mean it was just too much. This was the moment of what I said, I mean I cannot just sit like that and just do nothing, you know, and pretend it's not my problem."